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~~TOP SECRET~~

Meeting began: 8:40 a.m.
Meeting ended: 10:15 a.m.

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S
BREAKFAST MEETING
WITH
CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS
AND
POLICY ADVISORS

January 31, 1968
In the Mansion

The President: I appreciate your coming here. I hope Senator Russell can be out of the hospital as quickly as possible.

Our people have talked with General Eisenhower. In addition, we have talked with Senator Russell, McGeorge Bundy, George Ball, Henry Cabot Lodge and General Taylor. I have discussed this matter with my senior foreign policy advisors and with many of the men I have mentioned who are outside of government. I intend to ask General Ridgeway to come in to discuss this with me.

I want to review the problems of the Nation with you. There is not a war spirit in the country, but we do have more sympathizers and "agents of the enemy" in this country working against us.

I have always felt that man's judgment is no better than his information. We have spent a great deal of time on this situation. I have received reports from 90 ambassadors. I asked Clark Clifford, George Ball, Henry Cabot Lodge, and General Taylor to come in Sunday and go over this. We are calling on men like Mark Clark and Admiral McDonald to look at it. We have talked to Senator Smith, Senator Stennis and Senator Russell.

A desperate attack is being launched against us in Vietnam. At the same time the number of incidents has changed from 57 to more than 570 during the past year in and around the DMZ in Korea. This Pueblo seizure was well planned.

The JCS reviewed the military plans and have told me they have done everything we can for Westmoreland. Everything he has requested we have granted. All of them believe he is prepared to handle the situation in Vietnam.

General Wheeler: I will read to you excerpts received at 4:18 this morning from General Westmoreland.

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In it he reports on the country's wide attacks throughout South Vietnam. There were heavy attacks in Saigon. The DMZ and Khesanh are quiet.

We have inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy. At Kontun 300 enemy were killed.

We estimate the enemy has lost 3,000 men killed in action in the last two days. This compares with about 300 allied losses, including 100 U.S. We know they are prepared for a major offensive at Khesanh.

The President: We still face a big challenge at Khesanh. At home many people want to destroy confidence in your leaders and in the South Vietnamese government. I ask you to measure your statements before you make them. The greatest source of Communist propaganda statements is our own statements.

We are going to stand up out there. We are not about to return to the enclave theories.

President Eisenhower said, what I want most for the President is for him to win the war.

(A copy of the telephone conversation with General Eisenhower is attached as Appendix A.)

The enemy has about 40,000 men around Khesanh. You won't hear much in the press about how bad the enemy's bombing in Saigon was last night. You won't hear many speeches about the North Korean's attempt to cut off President Park's head and to kill the American Ambassador. All we hear about is how bad our bombing is.

We see both of these actions in Vietnam and in Korea as a coordinated challenge.

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